

ECB Stormwater Subcommittee Meeting Summary

Oct. 26, 2010

Master Builders Association Housing Center

ECB Stormwater Subcommittee Members:

Sam Anderson (MBA), Josh Baldi (Ecology), Allison Butcher (MBA), Patty Charnas (North Central Action Area), Bill Dewey (Taylor Shellfish), Tom Eaton (EPA), Fred Jarrett (King County), Dave Peeler (People for Puget Sound), Naki Stevens (DNR) and Dan Wrye (South Puget Sound Action Area).

Observers and Guests:

Chris Townsend (PSP), Pam Bissonnette (Bissonnette Environmental Solutions, LLC), Joan Lee (Parametrix), Tammy Owings (PSP), Megan Smith (King Co.), Rob Dudra (Pierce Co.), Greg Hanon (Western States Petroleum Association), Diana Carlen (Senate Republican Caucus), John Palmer (EPA), Grant Nelson (AWB), Carl Schroeder (House Democratic Caucus), Jennifer Jerabek (MBA) and Linda Berry-Maraist (city of Poulsbo)

Organizing the Subcommittee

After a discussion about how to organize itself, the subcommittee decided to limit participation on the subcommittee to ECB members or designated alternates interested in serving. The subcommittee will invite guests to provide presentations as needed and allow other stakeholders to observe meetings. Subcommittee members are encouraged to consult with their caucuses in advance of meetings, and input by interested parties is welcome.

Stormwater Needs Assessment Report and Draft Stormwater Vision for Puget Sound

Pam Bissonnette presented a summary of key findings from the Stormwater Needs Assessment Report, which she prepared together with Parametrix for the Puget Sound Partnership. The Partnership contract calls for the needs assessment to be based on Ecology standards in effect as of 1996. The report is intended, on a coarse scale, to quantify the costs of two components of urban stormwater pollution control: 1) estimated costs of cities and counties to implement the Municipal NPDES Phase I and Phase II permit programs, and 2) the need for stormwater retrofits. The Needs Assessment documents that about \$170 million per year is spent on operational costs of the NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit by cities and counties in the Puget Sound Basin, with more than 90% of those costs paid by local governments. The Needs Assessment also identified a retrofit cost of between \$3 billion and \$16 billion, depending on the percentage of development that is retrofitted.

Pam also reviewed an initial draft of a Stormwater Vision for Puget Sound, which is the next step in this effort being undertaken for the Partnership. The purpose of the Draft Vision is to spell out a list of goals for stormwater management in Puget Sound, along with actions and desired outcomes. It will encompass a much broader universe of stormwater actions than just the municipal stormwater permits (e.g., other permits, runoff from other, non-urban sources such as agriculture, source control, etc.). A final review draft of the Stormwater Needs Assessment is nearing completion and will be available for public review and comment soon. The Draft Vision is still a work in progress; the Partnership hopes to fill out the detail of the framework by the end of the year.

Currently, the Draft Vision also contains a list of potential funding sources for stormwater, as follows:

- Current EPA funding for allocation in 2010+
- Additional Federal allocation(s)
- HST, “flush tax,” or public vote on a funding source as State contribution
- WSDOT funding
- Regional/Local government share from Drainage Utilities, Flood Control Districts, Watershed Districts or other local sources [limited to authorized purposes only]
- REET 3 and/or CFT increase [limited to property acquisition and historic preservation]
- Conservation District Assessment, including an increase for PS counties to \$10/parcel [limited to conservation]

Potential Stormwater Funding Sources Being Discussed by the Partnership and Others

Chris Townsend provided an overview of funding sources being discussed by the Partnership and others to help provide a lay of the land on this subject from the agency’s perspective.

For starters, EPA is focusing on stormwater funding as a priority through its restoration-grant process. On that note, part of Ecology’s submission for the current grant process is a proposal to help prioritize retrofit projects and better focus limited dollars there. Also, of the \$50 million in capital funding approved by the state legislature in 2010, approximately half was designated for priority retrofits.

At the state level, the Washington State Dept. of Transportation has a Phase 1 NPDES permit program focused on runoff from impervious surfaces associated with existing, expanded and new highways.

Also, the hazardous substance tax proposal from the last legislative session is still on the table.

At the local level, the Partnership is in discussions with partners on how it can best help Puget Sound districts. Chris mentioned that proposals under discussion by others dealing with flood control and water resources may be examples to build on.

Discussion/Additional Ideas for Funding and Actions

The subcommittee covered several issues during its discussion, including, among others: the need to have a better picture of the relative proportionate shares for stormwater funding from local, state and federal sources to help frame our discussion; the importance of identifying the needs and timing first, then focusing on possible approaches; the need to address our impervious surface legacy, much like we did with wastewater; the importance of first identifying principles for stormwater funding and expenditures; and the challenges of balancing operations and maintenance with retrofitting.

Some specific suggestions were presented by individual subcommittee members. These are included below, but do not represent agreement on or recommendations from the subcommittee:

- Take a look at the state's Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) to see if there's any relevance for the subcommittee's work.
- Establish as a principle that the outcomes of this effort should result in healthy watersheds.
- Look at how other cities are dealing with stormwater funding.
- Consider a fluid-leak program for vehicles, much like we currently have for tail pipe emissions.
- Have a clear plan in place for prioritizing retrofits.
- Focus limited resources on maintenance first and see how we can institutionalize and grow the effort over time.
- Allow locals to organize themselves to raise funding through districts.
- Look at the list of 25 potential funding sources identified by WRIA 9.
- Redirect existing state grant sources toward local NPDES permit implementation.
- Find ways to promote private investment for stormwater, whether through ecosystem services or by providing incentives to the private side.
- Look at the potential for public-private partnerships that could include, for example, commitments from the private sector for source control and/or to provide land for retrofits.
- Strive to achieve a greater proportionate share of federal and state funding to cover costs of managing stormwater under NPDES permits and retrofitting development to current standards.

Next Steps

The subcommittee decided to:

- Review the list of potential funding sources identified by WRIA 9.
- Help the Partnership as it fills out the Draft Stormwater Vision for Puget Sound.
- Meet again within a month.